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IPC - committees

USIB

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25 May 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Proposed Establishment of a USIB Committee  
on Information Handling

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1. [REDACTED] called a meeting of the Information Processing Coordinators on Monday 22 May 1967 to discuss the Agency reply to the DIA proposal that a committee on information handling be established with four subcommittees, one of which would replace the present committee on documentation (CODIB). Present were [REDACTED] Charles Briggs, Rudy [REDACTED] John Vance, [REDACTED] and the undersigned.

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2. The content of the paper did not come under discussion. Most of the comments were directed at DIA motivation in submitting the paper and speculation about its implications in inter-agency power politics. There is a great deal of concern among some of those present that the CIA role in the intelligence community is eroding as a result of actions being taken in the internal Agency management. I got the impression that ceiling and budgetary limitations within which individual Agency components are being constrained to operate cause them to look first to the services being provided for the intelligence community when a reduction in men or money is imposed. This means that the Agency is cutting back in the services it furnishes to the community with the result that DIA in particular and the Department of Defense in general are looking for ways to fill the breach. There is apparently serious concern among those present that this is an erosion which the Agency should not allow to occur, but they feel frustrated by what they consider to be the failure of Agency management to grasp the full significance of the information handling problem. The frustration seems to be that they, in their agency organizations, have a responsibility to fulfill a role in the community which they should not abrogate but that the decisions of their senior managers are forcing them into a position where they can do nothing else. In connection with the DIA proposal, there is a position which those present feel the Agency should take but they recognize that resources

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must be available to permit that position to be supported. Therefore they feel they are in a position of trying to react in a way that will be acceptable to Agency management without really knowing what Agency management will accept.

3. I commented that the area of interest of CODIB was ordinarily outside the scope of Support Directorate information handling problems and that usually we only become involved with CODIB activities when they generate some requirement for security or communications support. Nevertheless I offered the opinion that the DIA proposal seemed to be nothing more than a third iteration of an approach to problems which had twice before aborted. The SCIPS effort in 1961-63 was the first; the CODIB task teams, of which there were ten, was the second; and the current DIA proposal would be the third. It seems to be relatively useless to go down the same road again in a slightly different vehicle but pointed toward the same ill-defined destination. I said perhaps the difficulty had been the propensity to look at subject matter rather than systems; that "information handling" has become a separate subject superimposed upon all functions or systems which handle information simply because there is equipment available which makes it possible to handle information differently and better; that, simply because equipment is available, there has been a tendency to take problems and cram them into the machine in the hope that a solution will be disgorged; that computers are expected to be the panacea to all problem solution. I said I had the impression that the SCIPS effort was an attempt to look at the intelligence community as a "totality" and the effort aborted because of the overwhelming magnitude. The follow-on CODIB task team efforts dealt with subject matter problem areas. There has never been an attempt to identify systems in a community or inter-agency context and then to define "system totalities" in comprehensible sizes such that could be some hope of achievement with resources that might be available. I said I thought perhaps the best response we could make to the DIA proposal would be to avoid going around the same old squirrel cage one more time and recommend that we take some sort of system approach which we should define as a counter proposal.

4. With that the meeting adjourned.



Chief, Support Services Staff

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